RIDERS UP!

"Riders Up!" is the traditional command from the Paddock Judge for jockeys to mount their horses in advance of the upcoming race. But since 2012, Churchill Downs has reserved that special honor for a dignitary or celebrity attendee when it comes to the Kentucky Derby.

Year	Celebrity Riders Up!	
2022	Jack Harlow	Rapper
2021	D. Wayne Lukas	HOF Trainer
2020	(no celebrity because of pandemic)	
2019	Baker Mayfield	NFL QB
2018	Laila Ali	ex-boxer
2017	Jeff Bridges	actor
2016	Sean Peyton	NFL Coach
2015	Teddy Bridgewater	NFL QB
2014	Julius Irving (aka "Dr. J")	ex-NBA Star
2013	Charlie Strong	UofL Football
2012	John Calipari	UK Basketball

"Riders Up" typically occurs across from Stall 1 in the Saddling Paddock around 19 minutes in advance of the start of the Kentucky Derby and is broadcast live on **NBC**. After the command, jockeys receive a leg up on their mounts and immediately turn right to the Paddock Runway, which leads to the racetrack.

In 2015, Teddy Bridgewater, the popular former University of Louisville quarterback who was named the NFL Rookie of the Year as a Minnesota Viking, proclaimed: "Ladies and Gentlemen, the city of Louisville, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and sports fans from around the world have been waiting for this moment … Riders Up!"